DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 244 672 JC 840 258

AUTHOR Shannon, W. G.
TITLE Federal Programs and the Mission of the Predominantly Hispanic Community Colleges.
PUB DATE May 84
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Hispanic Roundtable Talk of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (Phoenix, AZ, May 23-24, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Bilingual Education; Community Colleges; *Educational Legislation; *Federal Legislation; *Federal Programs; *Hispanic Americans; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

Highlighting challenges facing leaders of Hispanic communities and colleges with predominantly Hispanic enrollments, this paper identifies some of the federal sources of assistance that should be explored to meet those challenges. First, information on Hispanic participation in the U.S. educational system is presented, focusing on low retention rates, limited educational opportunities, and specific educational needs. The issue of orienting Hispanic children to the traditions of U.S. government and society is raised prior to the identification of sources of funding for Hispanic education, including Title IV of the Higher Education Act, Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs programs, the National Science Foundation, and the Job Training Partnership Act. After listing issues that repeatedly arise in Congressional discussions of education, recent developments in federal offices and in Congress are highlighted. The paper concludes by calling attention to possible sources of political leverage and the need for more accessible and comprehensive information on the federal and state programs that may be useful to predominantly Hispanic community colleges and their constituencies. (AYC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED244672

Federal Programs and the Mission of the Predominantly Hispanic Community Colleges

by

W. G. Shannon, Executive Director

National Advisory Committee on Continuing Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessa ily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

W. G. Shannon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

AACJC Hispanic Roundtable Talk

May 23 - 24, 1984

Phoenix, Arizona

JC 840 258

May 1984

Federal Programs and the Mission of the Predominantly Hispanic Community Colleges

by

W. G. Shannon, Executive Director
National Advisory Committee on Continuing Education

When Pepe Barron invited me to speak at the Hispanic Roundtable in Phoenix on May 23-24, 1984 on legislation, my first reaction was to suggest that my work of the past several years hadn't allowed me to remain as intimately connected with the community college movement as I once was. My contributions to your discussions would necessarily be limited, although I am now involved with matters relating to Congress and the federal establishment generally.

His powers of persuasion are subtle but effective, so I began to dig into the subject to find out what federal programs might be most useful to your institutions and the many people you serve. I also reviewed some of the Congressional developments to estimate what might happen to the bills dealing with adult education and with vocational education, as listed on your program. There are federal programs which you are already using fully and there are others which might be of greater assistance if you strengthened your efforts to tap their resources.

As I reviewed the striking demographic information about the Hispanic communities, I felt the need for some frame of reference within which my observations and my comments might make more sense.

This is an audience that needs no introduction to or special discussion on demographics. I am your student in these matters. What impresses me most are these several points:

1. More than half of the Hispanic population is under the age of 21. As the general population ages, the majority will become increasingly dependent upon the work skills, tax payments, and political attitudes of a relatively smaller cohort of young people of whom the Hispanics are a large percentage. Moreover, this percentage is growing.

   In elaboration of this point, Alan Pifer states: "...we should not deceive ourselves into thinking that in furthering the education of Hispanic children we would be doing it out of the goodness of our hearts; we would be doing it for ourselves as well." We can assume, of course, that this statement is being directed to the majority groups.

2. The record of involvement in education for Hispanic children is a lamentably poor one. Entrance into high school and retention until graduation are low as compared with other groups. Similarly, enrollment and retention in postsecondary education, and movement into post-graduate work need much improvement to bring these levels up to the experience of other groups, or, more importantly, to the potential of the Hispanic population.

3. The educational opportunities available to Hispanic children in the nation's public schools are limited and restricted by a number of elements and forces that may seem uncontrollable.

In a Christian Science Monitor article (2/6/84), Elvira Valenzuela Crocker writes about Hispanics' needs for:

more textbooks with current Hispanic usage;

well-rounded curricula with more math and science;

teachers trained to work with Hispanic children;

well-stocked libraries;

decent facilities;

access to computers.

In addition, Ms. Crocker points out the need to marry the home and the school, for example, by using parents as teachers' aides.

She also stresses the importance of having more Hispanics on school policy boards.

Of course, these same or similar comments can apply to all of the nation's school, but when the future critical place of the Hispanic population is projected within the larger American community a decade or two ahead, their needs become even more urgent.

In some respects this may be the worst time for staking out claims to the American Dream of abundance and free institutions in a free society, with such formidable obstacles to the orientation and education of our children so

evident. Yet, in other ways, this may be the best of times for realizing the dreams of the past because we do have resources which can be used, we can work up the will to do what is necessary if the available leadership can help organize, stimulate, and provide guidance.

It is within the context, then, of the urgent needs of the total society in which the Hispanic peoples will play an even more important role that in the past several decades that I want to share these ideas with you.

The leadership roles you all fill have awesome responsibilities attached to them. Your positions are central and critical to the entire scope of Hispanic developments coming in the future. It is this nugget of an idea that makes this conference and all your subsequent meetings and strategies so potentially fruitful.

It is also this centrality of your work for the future that creates opportunities that your predecessors may not have had. I'm not at all certain how much help current federal programs can be in face of the overwhelming requirements. But you should have all the help that is available and should work for more assistance as the wider communities come to realize the importance to our total society of the success of your efforts. You have responsibilities not only to your immediate institution and community, but also to the larger body politic within which we all reside and work. Your concerns have to encompass both the pedagogical elements and the tone and spirit of the democratic society we all want. Some people feel that we may be in danger of losing some of our traditions and styles of freedom because of the growing problem of indoctrinating or orienting the younger generations to

the traditions of our government and society generally.

Sidney Hook, in his Jefferson lecture on May 14, spoke of the danger of your young people not knowing enough about our American traditions of a free society and about the possibility of losing important qualities of the American community through this ignorance. He called for education in democratic governance and practices, better orientation to the traditions of open, pluralistic communities, and a deeper understanding of the history of free institutions and how to keep them free. He doesn't have faith that studies in science or in the humanities alone can insure the preservation of our institutions. Schools and colleges have to join with others to pass on the traditions of our society.

The broad setting, then, is crucial in helping to set goals for the community colleges which you administer, and it is with this larger framework in mind that we can review current legislation for whatever help it might provide.

I had hoped when drafting these comments to be able to report the passage of a new Vocational Education Act and a new Adult Education Act. But Congress is still working on both bills. There are significant differences in the House and Senate versions. How they will emerge from conference, if at all, is an open question. If neither new bill passes now, there will be an automatic extension of the current laws for one year. I will return to this subject later.

A review of your colleges' involvement in Title IV of the Higher Education

Act Student Finanical Assistance Programs shows that most, but not all, of you are receiving these funds. Title IV is where the big money is. Most of the funds provided by the federal government are in this title. But other sources are also important to tap. These include the familiar ones, such as the Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA) programs, the National Science Foundation, the programs in health fields administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Jobs Training Partnership Act, and the various titles under the Higher Education Act along with Title IV.

To keep abreast of the federal programs and all the regulations requires constant monitoring. I know that some of you are readers for Title III or are involved in other ways with the federal offices administering various funding programs. However, as I tried to gather information about the programs of most use to your institutions, I came across little coordination of information, very few listings of pertinent legislation, and scattered efforts to assemble all this information. I hope that your efforts here will lead to actions to remedy this situation. It is difficult but necessary to stay on top of the developments in the federal offices and in Congress. There is help available but there is a need, I believe, for some concerted action that will not only report on what is happening, but will also cause things to happen. The discussion on the Vocational Education Act in the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, chaired by Senator Stafford of Vermont, brought out the differences in thinking about issues that will ultimately determine the support that will be available to the states and to institutions. Some of these same issues arise in discussions on bilingual education, adult education, the Higher Education Act, and others. An understanding of these cross-cutting issues helps provide perspective not only

on the substantive differences in policy that members of Congress express, but also on the possible outcome of the discussions.

Following are some of the issues that arise repeatedly in Congressional discussions on education:

- Is it appropirate for the federal government to be involved at all in a particular program?
- If so, how much money should be invested?
- What are the respective roles for the federal government, the states, local government, the institutions?
- Should there be general funding, possibly block grants, or should set-asides be established for particular target groups?
- Should funds be directed to individuals or to the institutions that serve them?
- Should specific amounts of money to be spent be pre-determined by the Congress or should this decision be left to later consideration?
- What will be more appealing to the voters, especially in election years?

In the case of the Vocational Education Act, the issue of the state role versus the federal role caused a real battle in the Senate Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities (S 2341). The question of set-asides for special groups such as the disadvantaged and the handicapped, too, nearly derailed the discussion. For a while, these arguments suggested that no bill would be forthcoming from the subcommittee. Senator Quayle of Indiana, who opposed most of the motions by the chairman, Senator Stafford, and Senators

Pell and Hatch, has said that he may take the fight to the floor of the Senate to try to win his points.

The House bill (HR 4164), meanwhile, would extend the Act for five years and continue requiring a set-aside of 15 percent by the states for postsecondary and adult vocational education. It would also create a new program for training, retraining, and job development for adults. The Senate version, too, requires a 15 percent postsecondary set-aside and would expand vocational education for the disabled, single heads of households, and adults who need retraining. It would also encourage industry to assume some of the cost of training new workers.

Following approval by each house, the bills will have to be reconciled. What will emerge is anybody's guess at this time.

A somewhat similar but less complicated picture has developed with respect to the Adult Education Act. The House Committee on Education and Labor has passed an extension of the present law with an added $40 million to bring the authorized total to $140 million.

The Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources has passed S 2496, also at the $140 million level, which would give states more flexibility by dropping the 20 percent set-aside for programs for people in mental institutions. It also removes the 10 percent requirement of states for training adult-education teachers. The Senate committee would also open the door to proprietary institutions to get a share of the federal grants to the states.

The Higher Education Act, which is up for reauthorization in 1985, is not getting much attention now. The Senate has shown little or no interest in taking up this legislation, In the House, Congressman Paul Simon, running for the Senate position held by Senator Percy of Illinois, attempted to get his colleagues to write a new law, but didn't get very far. He held hearings, and received a lot of testimony from a number of individuals and organizations. He found a great deal of interest in the field, but not in the subcommittee he chairs, the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the House Committee on Education and Labor. When he attempted a full discussion in the subcommittee, no one else endorsed the idea of reauthorizing the legislation. Congressman Tom Coleman of Missouri felt this was not a good time for the discussion, and Congressman William Ford, the former chairman of the subcommittee, made it clear there would be no future for any bill that did not have the traditional bi-partisan support normally given legislative proposals by this group.

One bill by Congressman Steve Gunderson of Wisconsin to amend Title I of the the Higher Education Act was introduced but remains on the shelf at this time. It may, however, provide a base for some expected parallel action in the Senate. There, Senator Hatch has expressed interest in his own amendment to Title I to encourage colleges and universities to provide more and better services and programs to adult learners. Your will undoubtedly be hearing more about this in the very near future, once I put on my other hat as a staff member of an advisory group on this subject.

You will be interested to know that another study group has been set up to review vocational education at the secondary levels. This group will operate out of the Ohio State University Center for Research in Vocational Education

and is to report by January 1985.

I want to mention the Bilingual Education Program but will not be so presumptious as to pose as an expert when there are so many of the country's most knowledgeable individuals on the subject here at this conference. While there is already involvement of community colleges in this kind of program, there is concern that greater numbers should seriously consider moving more vigorously into this work. One of the recurrent issues that can emerge, of course, is whether or not it would be appropriate federal policy to have a set-aside for Hispanics in community colleges. This is a basic question that can generate a lot of heat as well as light. For example, in hearings on Title III of the Higher Eduction Act, the Developing Institutions Program, there was criticism of attempts to target monies on Black colleges and universities and on colleges with large Hispanic enrollemnts. One speaker noted that the poor of Appalachia need special help to get a proper education, and that if the poor from all rural areas were to be organized, they would form a larger cohort than any of the ethnic minorities. Politically, he said, they could have more muscle than any other group.

On May 13 and 14, the Washington Post ran two articles entitled "U.S. Hispanics 'Melting' But Hardly Prospering." Several points made by the writer, Paul Taylor, touched on the problems of language education. He wrote:

> Poverty correlates to poor school performace and is part of the vicious cycle Hispanics face. But Lauro F. Cavazo, president of Texas Tech., places the blame closer to home, saying "Hispanics have lost education; they don't value it anymore. They have other values, and that distresses me because unless we Hispanics--and I can say this because I can really put the hammer to them--unless we change the

attitudes within the family, it's not going to change out there...You have got to drag them to the schoolhouse somehow. Frankly, all the bilingual education in the world is fine up to a certain state, but, beyond that, it must start in the family...."

It seems to me that this is a crucial point. Here, again, the responsibilities that all Hispanic leaders share must include a concern for the family unit, the place where young children learn about life and their relationships within the community.

The situation is strikingly similar to that which obtained at the turn of the century when my parents immigrated to this country. The family unit provided warmth, comfort, and indoctrination in the early formative years when life patterns and values are established. This was no less true for many others than the immigrants, but it was an especially crucial element in developing and maintaining a pluralistic society that had many extremely important common strands and commitments.

So I return to the framework I started with--the many challenges you face as leaders of your communities, and the opportunities that may be available for drawing assistance from all sources: federal, state, local, and community. It is within that context that one of these, the federal, should be explored, developed, nourished, and expanded for the common good, not only for Hispanics.

In this dimension, there is political leverage if it can be wielded. There is the need to get information to the families and to the children of younger years, and to stress that education can still be a door to a more

abundant life and to sustaining the values we all need to protect. You have a responsibility for interpreting the trends both within your own close communities and to the public-at-large. You are in the critical decision-making positions that can influence and shape other trends of the future.

Federal policy and assistance might be generated in different ways--through legislation, which is the most common route; through Executive Orders by the President; from administrative practice of program officials; or even initially from party platforms, especially in election years.

There are many channels through which to direct your energies--the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, CONAC, the National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, and the many other agencies with which you are more familiar than I. Private foundations need your appeals and encouragement. They will grow increasingly sensitive, I believe, to the implications of the demographic trends. I'm not sure at this point what proportion of the help that the nation's situation calls for will be forthcoming from the federal government, although I am confident it has to be an increasing share as time goes on. The business and labor sector have interests here and must be continucusly educated on Hispanics' needs.

There is a lack of focus to the gathering of potentially useful information and data relative to federal, state, or other programs. Perhaps this group can take steps to fill that requirement. One beginning move would be to request the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to ask the Congressional research arm of the Library of Congress to catalog all relevant federal

programs for their use and yours. There are programs in the Department of Commerce, the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Science Foundation, the Endowments, and other agencies that should be made more visible.

As I mentionned at the start, the societal concerns must be uppermost in anyone's mind when reviewing the kinds of assistance your institutions need. The problems facing you must be made known to the wider community.

The sense of proportion you exhibit and the perspectives you place on the work ahead will create the conditions for moving to solutions. Federal assistance will be one piece of the larger mosaic of support you will have to draw upon, but it should be a most significant one. How to achieve this state of affairs is the question. I believe that when your missions are seen as integral parts of plans for the survival of our pluralistic community, the support will be forthcoming.

In an article on pragmatism as a school of thought, a writer says that this distinctively American mode of philosophic thinking came from the combination of the theorizing of European empiricists like Hume, Hobbs, and Locke, and the American experience of community building. Underlying this thought is a democratic and common faith--Dewey called it a religious faith. What Dewey thought was unique about it "is the willingness to tolerate other religious commitments as part of itself. America is pluralistic not by accident, but because it cannot be other than pluralistic without being untrue to itself." That author says, too, that it is close to impossible to find a pessimistic pragmatist.

You've been hanging in there for a long time. I sense no pessimism here. I think the fact that you are who you are and are in your responsible positions augers well for the nation.

ERIC® CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

JUL 2 0 1984

8118 Math-Sciences Building
Los Angeles, California 90024